

4473.g.14.
1-22.

The Christian Salutation.

A

FAREWEL-SERMON

DELIVERED

October 12, 1766.

Price Six-pence.

The Christian's Solution.

A

FAREWELL-SERMON



October 1766.

Price Six-pence.

The Christian Salutation.

A
FAREWEL-SERMON
DELIVERED

October 12, 1766.

ON

The return of the Congregation under the
Care of the Rev. Mr. JOHN ROGERS,
from their occasional Association with the
Church meeting near the *Maze-pond*,
Southwark.

Published at the Request of the Churches
then assembled together.

By BENJAMIN WALLIN.

Let brotherly Love continue, Heb. xiii. 1.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the AUTHOR; and sold by J. Buckland, in
Pater-noster-Row; E. and C. Dilly, in the *Poultry*; G. Keith
and E. Gardiner, in *Gracechurch-Street*; and B. Tomkins,
in *Fenchurch-Street.* 1766.

The Christian's Sabbath

A

FAREWELL SERMON

DELIVERED

ON

ON

The return of the Congregation under the
Care of the Rev. Mr. John Rogers
from their occasional Abode with the
Chapel meeting



Published at the Request of the Church
then assembled together

BY BENJAMIN WALLIS

Printed by J. G. Allen, 11, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4

1850

L O N D O N

Printed for the Author, and sold by J. G. Allen, 11, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4. Also by J. G. Allen, 11, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4. Also by J. G. Allen, 11, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.

T O

My worthy FRIENDS who attended
the Delivery, and desired an
Impression of the ensuing
DISCOURSE.

Dearly Beloved,

IT is owing to your repeated and earnest request that the following Sermon appears: Any apprehension of its being made public would have tempted me to have laid aside the thoughts of so familiar an Address; but I could not decently refuse to comply with the unanimous voice of both Congregations, and especially

iv DEDICATION.

when I knew that their motives were a pious Memorial of the pleasing intercourse they frequently enjoyed in their united Assemblies; and a desire of commending the like friendly correspondence to others.

Some complain, and not without reason, that, in all appearance, we are declining from brotherly love; at least there is not that intimate converse, and visible friendship, which once was known to subsist among the Ministers and Churches of Christ, to their mutual honor and advantage: This is the more to be lamented, seeing unfeigned love of the Brethren is the constant Companion of vital religion.

Under

DEDICATION. v

Under these circumstances every fresh mark of respect, and seasonable token of love, between adjoining christian Communities must be acceptable to those who seek the welfare of *Israel*. It certainly tends to promote a becoming harmony among those who profess the same gospel; and if our example, with others of the like kind, shall contribute to the desirable end, we shall not repent this occasion of its being made known.

Other reasons may be assigned why some are unfociable; but, in general, one manifest cause of a cold and distant behaviour among real Christians is, as I apprehend, a mistaken conduct on their different sentiments and practice in some point which relates to their holy profession.

Through

vi DEDICATION.

Through faith we understand that the happy time will come when the Lord shall comfort his People with a perfect, and universal unity in judgment: For *Zion's watchmen shall see eye to eye, and lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing.* Till then we have a plain rule, which I take leave to mention: it is recorded *Philip. iii. 15, 16. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.*

The wisdom which is from above, and which is pure and peaceable, doth not lie in passing over, much less in acting
contrary

DEDICATION. vii

contrary to the dictates of our conscience, under a specious pretence of union and love: If any make a shew in this way, “they zealously affect us; but not “well.”

Genuine charity is discovered in bearing with one another; *i. e.* allowing others a difference in opinion or form in any particular, not subversive of the foundation of God; and, what fairer proof of this truly Christian toleration can be given than this; when Brethren of a different persuasion gladly embrace every opportunity of yielding a practical instance of their cordial esteem for each other?

I have only further to intreat that you would *continue in the love of God,*
looking

viii DEDICATION.

*looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus
Christ unto eternal life: And cease not
to pray for us, your faithful Ministers,
“ Who watch for your souls as they that
“ must give account.” This, Beloved,
is the ardent desire of*

Your affectionate Friend,

And obliged Servant,

*Maze-pond, Southwark,
Nov. 5, 1766.*

Benjamin Wallin.

The

The Christian Salutation.

A

FAREWEL-SERMON, &c.

II COR. XIII. 11.

Finally, brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

OUR beloved Friends, here present, whom we have received under this roof, while destitute of a meeting-place, having by the favor of providence compleated their building, and being about to return, I have thought it seasonable, and hope it may be useful to open and apply this gospel - salutation. Your known affection, not only to myself, and to one another, but likewise to all who call on the name of Jesus, their Lord and ours, will not allow me to hesitate your joining heartily in every becoming expression of kindness to them at their departure.

B

The

The passage is too copious to be minutely considered in a single discourse. It is a compleat exhortation, in which all things needful to the prosperity and joy of a christian Society stand in a beautiful connexion. A passage which contains my sincere and ardent wish for our own selves, for you, my Brethren, who are now going from us, and for all the Churches of Jesus Christ.

My purpose is not so much to enlarge on the directions given in the text, but rather to express our fervent desire of your enjoying the blessing insured. There is neither the same † occasion on your part, nor the like authority on mine, which subsisted between the Apostle and the Corinthians, when he wrote this epistle, but the words are adapted to my friendly design, and I hope that the liberty I shall take in applying the subject will be accepted in love.

Three things in general are to be considered, namely, The Apostle's good wish, or valediction, his wholesom and excellent advice, and the encouraging motive by which he animates them to walk together in the manner prescribed.

I must

† Schisms and various disorders.

I must touch very briefly on the two first of these points, that I may be the more particular on the last, which I have principally in view ; after handling these I shall close in a few words of reflection and advice on our parting ; and may the Lord succeed my endeavour to our mutual advantage.

I. The valediction runs in these words : *Finally, brethren, farewell.* The Apostle had wrote largely, and insisted on many things of the greatest importance, and being about to finish his letter he thus expresses himself : *Finally*, i. e. for the rest, or as to what remains ; *q. d.* to close in one word. The closing paragraph includes this, and the three following verses, in which these Disciples are most affectionately exhorted, saluted, and blessed. But the main instruction is contained in the text, with a promise, the opening of which will be a principal part of our discourse ; it stands thus introduced, *brethren, farewell.*

The Apostle had learned of the Lord not to be ashamed to call the least in his Church by this endearing and respectful character ; indeed he saw and reprov'd many disorders among the *Corinthians*, neverthe-

less he owns them his Brethren, and discovers an affection suited to that intimate spiritual relation.

It is not becoming our profession to unchristian persons, or to unchurch Societies, in our opinion and conduct, because of some irregularities which deserve to be censured: we are taught to admonish in brotherly love, and should not harshly reject a man from our bosom, whose faults we are obliged to condemn, but know that, in the present state, many failings consist with uprightness of heart. But to return.

The apostles wish is *farewel* χαίρει i. e. literally *rejoice*; it answers, say the Critics, to the Hebrew word שלום we render peace; a term which includes every kind of felicity: The salutation is common, and implies a wish of prosperity in body, mind or estate: *Farewel*; *q. d.* peace be with you, may you do well and prosper in all things. This, my dear Friends, is our unanimous wish towards you: Was it needful or decent, I am persuaded that every voice in connexion with us would unite in adopting these kind and comprehensive words of the Apostle, and say; *Brethren farewel*: we wish you prosperity in the name of the Lord. But, Beloved, this happiness

pinels is to be attained in the use of means; which leads,

II. To the wholesom and excellent advice in the text; and this consists in the following particulars; *be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.* These several points hang together, as so many links of a golden chain, the fitness and beauty of which cannot be sufficiently admired. As hinted, I can only touch on their sense and connexion, in my way to the clause, chiefly intended in this farewel-discourse, and you will bear with my freedom under this head; and,

I. *Be perfect.* Whatever some may dream, there is no absolute perfection here; nevertheless perfection is required, and ascribed in a qualified sense, both to individual persons and to bodies of men, who may be comparatively perfect in their kind and degree; and each one should apply this exhortation of the Apostle to himself; but his immediate design seems that of being perfect in a social capacity. Perfection in a christian Community hath respect to her doctrine, worship, discipline, and works; the Church in Sardis was in a threatening state when Jesus from heaven declared by his

his Angel, saying, *Rev. iii. 2. I have not found thy works perfect before God*; yet, alas, is there not reason to fear that many Churches are chargeable, at least in a degree, with the like sad defect? However, the primary idea of the word is *fitness*, and it more particularly points to that branch of social religion, but too much neglected in the present day, namely, the *order* of the gospel: it is used to express the aptitude of that body in which the Word was manifested to take away sin. *Heb. x. 5.* “a body hast thou prepared, or “fitted me.” That holy flesh was duly prepared for its union with the Son of God, by the infinite wisdom of the Father, and the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost. In this sense it is also used *chap. xi. 3.* where the Apostle is speaking of the order of things in the universe; “through faith we understand “that the worlds were *framed* by the word “of God.”

The exhortation is to be taken according to the circumstances of the People unto whom it is given, if, as at *Corinth*, disorders prevail in a Church, she is hereby called upon to set things right, and to return to due order, for the allusion is to a Surgeon, whose province it is to restore, and set-

tle

tle every thing to its proper place in the natural body; but the word is likewise sometimes used for being more perfect, and may be applied to a People who are in an orderly state, and considered as an exhortation to maintain and confirm their happy condition, which is of no small importance, there being continual danger of one or another falling out of his place: No wonder that the Apostle begins with this, since, however unfashionable or slighted, a godly discipline may be, the purity and peace of a Church, and consequently the comfort and joy of her Members depend greatly on it. It is therefore highly unreasonable and much to be lamented when Professors are indifferent about it. The other articles naturally follow; consolation in Christ, and comfort of love are promoted by the perfection to which we are called. Hence the Apostle proceeds; *Be of good comfort*; this will be the case where order is preserved, and especially when its Companion, *unanimity* prevails, which is the next thing urged on the Faithful; *Be of one mind*. Different sentiments among real Christians are to be expected while we see but in part, and know but in part, which is no small trial of our faith and charity; but we
read

read that the multitude of the primitive Disciples were *of one heart and of one soul*. Acts iv. 32. And it is needful that the Members of the same Community be of one mind, in principle and practice, that they favour, affect, and mind the same thing; not their own things, which alas is too often the case, but “the things which are Jesus Christ’s.” Now where perfection, comfort, and oneness of mind prevail, peace will ensue, and accordingly the directions finish with this further exhortation: *Live in peace*. This stands opposed to dissensions and strivings one against another, and consists in that harmony and affection, the result of which is a mutual satisfaction and joy. Many are the temptations to contention and division among Christians, who are but too prone, through the flesh, to fall into the snare of the Enemy, who is sure to take the advantage of their folly; there is therefore daily need of exhorting one another to *live in peace*, without which no Society can be honourable or prosper.

Here, my Friends, charity must cover a multitude of sins: “Charity is the bond of perfectness.” This is the grand and only sufficient proof to others of our fellowship in
the

the Spirit, and of a real communion in Christ. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. John xiii. 35.* We are therefore exhorted, *Mark ix. 50. Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.* Without this favour, affection, and peace, our religion is vain. *Be then at peace among yourselves, 1 Theff. v. 13.* A different or contrary behaviour in christian Society is unworthy their character, who profess the gospel of peace; besides, it grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whose departure from a People is to be deprecated as fatal; but the presence and communion of this divine Person seems included in the assurance given in our text to those who are perfect, and live together in love; which brings me,

III. To consider the comprehensive and delightful promise: *And the God of love and peace shall be with you.* It would require greater talents, and more time than I am possessed of fully to display the contents of this gracious assurance: in general it is a promise of the divine presence and blessing, under which the Faithful may claim an expectation of the favourable presence of each di-

vine person, and conclude that Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit shall be with them : The adorable Three are equally, though in different respects, concerned in the edification of the Church, and where one dwells in mercy, the others are enjoyed ; in this view of the clause it carries in it nothing less than the certainty of attaining the whole that is expressed in the Apostle's benediction, viz. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost*, which is all that can be desired, or hoped for by them who fear the Lord, even when their hearts are enlarged to the utmost. But I humbly apprehend, *God* is here to be taken personally of the Father, and shall consider the sentence in reference to him. Mark, Beloved, the Apostle doth not barely say ; “ *and God shall be with you.*” Though that phrase is usually taken in a sense that might well satisfy the desires of his People, but he is more explicit and copious for the encouragement and joy of the Saints, who walk becoming the gospel of Christ ; he saith, the “ *God of love and peace shall be with you.*” How delightful the prospect ! With what gladness must it inspire the heart
of

of the Believer! Behold, O Christian, God the Father; the great Judge of all, cloathed in a mantle of love! See him, as John, in the isle of *Patmos* beheld him in a vision; displaying his glory as a God of grace: Lo a rainbow about his throne; the sure token of his faithfulness to the covenant of peace, which thy Redeemer, the Surety, hath ratified with his blood!

Let us take a view of this endearing and amiable character of our God and Father in the Lord Jesus Christ, and see what a People may expect from his presence, according to this promise. The epithets are two; First he is stiled a God *of love*. An appellation well supported by the divine word; in which all the grace and glory revealed in the gospel, and to be obtained at the hands of the Mediator, is ascribed to the special, unchangeable, and everlasting love of the Father, as the original moving cause. He may well be stiled a God of love, whose infinite love was displayed from everlasting in the provisions of his grace, and the blessings he gave his people in Christ, before the foundation of the world, as well as in what he hath bestowed upon, and wrought in

C 2

them,

them, in time. To his love, Brethren, is owing your election of God; and the greatness of this love was discovered in quickening you when dead in trespasses and sins; and above all, this affection of the Father is manifested, in sending his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him; and to be a propitiation for our sins, without which we could never have enjoyed the fruits of his kindness and mercy; this is the highest illustration of his love which can be conceived of. 2 *John* iv. 9.

Again, he is called the God of *peace*: an epithet no less confirmed in the scripture of truth than the other; peace on earth is the effect of the Father's love, who contrived and bestowed it, the purpose which he proposed in himself was a purpose of peace towards the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory; what is declared respecting the return of *Israel* from his captivity, *Jer.* xxix. 11. may be applied to the good pleasure of the Lord concerning his Chosen; *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Agreeable to these thoughts of his heart he entered into a counsel

fel of peace, and covenant of redemption with his Son, the Peace-maker, whom he gave out of his bosom for us, and having reconciled us to himself by his sufferings on the cross, as “the God of peace, brought this same Jesus again from the dead, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting testament;” and being thus reconciled, is on a throne of grace, freely dispensing peace, and life everlasting, by the Mediator, to every one that believes on his name. The Father may likewise bear this character, as he is not the author of confusion but of peace, and delights to dwell only where peace is maintained, as appears from the text.

In a word, he is the *very God of peace*, 1 Thess. v. 22. By every word of his mouth he speaks peace to the Faithful; and this is the voice of every dispensation of his providence towards them. He speaks nothing but peace to them that fear him. Hence saith the prophet, *Psalms lxxxv. 8. I will bear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace to his people and to his saints.* In this engaging point of light the Father is presented to our view. He is *the God of love and peace*; who
will

will take up his abode with them that walk together becoming their holy profession.

Now this divine presence in the Church is that which renders it so much desired by the Saints. The tabernacles of the most High are amiable to all them who love him, because his sanctuary is *the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwelleth. Psalm xxvi. 8.* None who worship God in the spirit, seek any thing less in coming up to the house of the Lord, than to behold his fair beauty, and to have fellowship with him, that he may receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. For God to dwell with a People under the characters laid out in the text, contains every thing needful to their honour and felicity : In a view of this promise the Faithful, who are in order and peace, may enlarge their desires ; and safely indulge the highest expectations, for it yields a certain prospect of every benefit and blessing which the love of an almighty Father can bestow, and insures the fruition of whatsoever may be enjoyed, in the present state, from the bounteous hand of his grace.

It

It may be useful still further to remind you of some particular advantages which result from this presence of the Lord with a People, or, what a Church may look for in consequence of the God of love and peace being with her. And,

1. She may be assured of her protection. The Almighty is a defence wheresoever he dwells. Thus saith the prophet *Isaiab xxxi. 5. The Lord of hosts will defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it.* A People enjoying this presence *shall dwell in the secret place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* In vain the counsels of hell, and the powers of darkness, associate against them. *Zion may boast in the Lord as Judah,* when the *Assyrian* forces were pouring in upon them, and threatened to fill *Immanuel's* land, *Isaiab viii. 9, 10. Associate yourselves, ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces, and give ear all ye far countries, who are in alliance with the Enemy; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand.* Whence this bold triumph? *For God is with us.* A well-grounded confidence. For

If God be for us who can be against us? This then is a certain consequence of the God of love and peace being with you, he will make you to dwell in safety, and no weapon formed against you shall prosper: *For I, saith the Lord, to Jerusalem, will be unto her a wall of fire round about.*

If any object, That many fair Churches, once the glory of a land, have in time been destroyed; It is granted: There are affecting instances not only of the gold becoming dim, but also of the candlestick being removed out of his place; large and flourishing Churches have at length declined, yea, and have even been utterly dissolved; but then, mark; how comes this to pass? Not from the unfaithfulness of God; No; but from the treachery and wickedness of man: The records of all ages, sacred and prophane, prove that the ruin of a gospel-church state, in any place, hath ever ensued on the lukewarmness, contentions, and manifold disorders of nominal Christians; witness the notorious errors, and scandalous behaviour of the People in *Asia*, and other parts of the eastern world, once famous for the light of the gospel, but now, and for centuries past, hath been fearfully
sunk

funk in *mahometan* darkness. *Let God be true and every man a liar;*" his promise is sure, nor can an instance be produced of a Church being dissolved while God was in the midst of her, or of the Lord's departing from a People whose works were perfect before him. But,

2. *Increase* is another advantage which attends this Divine presence. God *works* where he dwells; his arm will be revealed, under which the power of Satan shall be destroyed, and Sinners reduced, and brought to the obedience of faith: Where the Lord hath a pavilion his standard is raised, and his People are gathered. A visible increase as to numbers is not always in the same degree, though additions by conversion may be reasonably expected, and for the most part, more or less, accompany the presence of the Lord in the sense of our text: However success will attend the God of peace, whose visible and gracious abode with a Church walking together in love, will encourage many to join her: The language of young Converts, and others, to a People thus honoured, will be, as in *Zech. viii. 23. We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you.* Again,

3. It includes sensible communion with God in the way of his appointment. The God of love and peace shall be with you, *i. e.* he will commune with you, and manifest his glory and love in the midst of you. When the Lord dwelt between the Cherubims of old, he shined from his mercy-seat: This was his engagement with *Moses*, *Exodus xxv. 22.* *There will I meet with thee, and will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony.* Under that dispensation the Lord caused his goodness to pass before his Servants; the King was held in his galleries; he caused his face to shine on his People, and discovered himself in his temple, to their admiration and joy: Hence, *Psalms lxviii. 24.* *They have seen thy goings, O God, even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.* And in the New-Testament there are many comfortable assurances of this communion with God in waiting upon him, *Rev. iii. 20.* *If any man bear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.* What tender and lively expressions of mutual intercourse and fellowship are these! O the condescending kindness and grace of the Almighty,

Almighty, our covenant God! We may justly cry out with astonishment, in the words of the king: *But will God in very deed thus dwell with men on earth!* Verily thus it seemeth good in his sight. In much the same language our Saviour assures the Disciples of communion with the Father and himself, in keeping his precepts; *John xiv. 21. He that bath my commandments and keepeth them he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.* And again, verse 23. *If a man love me, and keep my words, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* And the Lord is faithful to his word, witness the experience of his Saints, whose testimony is sure, *1 John i. 3. Have Fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,* And,

4. I need only say * that pleasure and joy are inseparable from the fruition of this Divine presence, when displayed in a way of sensible communion. The Faithful indeed are not

D 2

always

* The Reader is desired to note, That, through the shortness of the season, several hints intended escaped, and particularly this article was but barely mentioned.

always† thus indulged in waiting on the Lord; many things tend to interrupt or occasion a suspension of this holy intercourse with our God in this state; but, when it is enjoyed, it affords unspeakable delight; and where the Lord dwells he is more or less manifesting himself to one or another, whose hearts, being opened and enlarged under the influence of his love, diffuse a sweet favour, and as it were perfume the whole house, which yields a most grateful sensation to all that dwell in it. Thus pleasant

† Uninterrupted delightful Fellowship with God seems not agreeable to this state of trial, nor has it been the general experience of the Saints. Indeed many of the primitive Christians appear to have had great joy in God, and sometimes they were exceedingly transported through the abundance of their spiritual entertainments: Their experience, in this respect, went far beyond what is usually known in the present day; but then we are to remember that their external sufferings for the gospel abounded. We walk by faith, not by sight. In the ordinary dispensations of grace it is rare that any are long solaced in the bosom of their Father, which rather belongs to the heavenly state. This reminds me of what, many years since, my late honoured Parent dropped from the pulpit: Speaking of communion with God, he mentioned an eminent Believer, who from long observation made this remark, “It is, faith he, for a moment;—and but for a moment; —very sweet—but very short!” I the rather note this that none may be discouraged who may be under the hidings of God’s face: Nevertheless we may seek after, and hope to obtain, a share of this foretaste of heaven, if we have respect to all his commandments.

fant is the communion of Saints, where Jehovah abides, and displays his loving-kindness and grace!

In one word, this promise includes every thing delightful and profitable: When the Apostle saith, *The God of love and peace shall be with you*, he engages for their certain and universal prosperity, and that they shall be happy in their fellowship with the Lord and one another. It is a promise which contains the substance of the account given of the heavenly *Jerusalem* itself, or the Church in her state of perfection and glory: See *Rev. xxi. 3. God himself shall be with them, and shall be their God.* And truly the blessedness of the Saints on earth and in heaven terminates in the presence and fruition of God; it differs only in the medium and degree of felicity; though it must be acknowledged that this difference vastly exceeds the power of language to describe, nor can the most advanced Believer form an adequate idea of the state of his Brethren who are passed into glory.

Thus it appears that where this promise is fulfilled (and it shall be fulfilled among a People who walk together in the manner directed) happy are that People! their Church-state is a kind of heaven upon earth! O that
the

the Lord would create on each of our Churches, and *upon every dwelling-place in mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night*; for we know that, where he thus dignifies a People, *upon all that glory there shall be a defence*, Isaiah iv. 5.

You see then, Beloved, the wish that becomes Brethren in Christ towards each other, for doubtless the Apostle is an example in the instance before us; we are to bid one another farewell, *i. e.* earnestly desire and pray for our mutual peace in the Lord; in order to which we may decently exhort one another to be knit together in love, to be united in heart and design, to mind the same thing, and to live in peace. This alone will justify our profession, and insure the communion of the Holy Ghost, on which depends our success: They who behave in this manner are promised the presence of the Father, in all the communications of his grace, as a God of love and peace, which carries in it every thing conducive to the honor and glory of a People; particularly, protection, increase, and intimate fellowship, accompanied with pleasure and joy, and, in a word, the utmost prosperity.

I shall

I shall note two things only, and close with some reflections and advice suited to the occasion of my discourse.

The one is : How pernicious and guilty are those who disturb the peace of a Christian Society ; let such look to themselves : Our Lord saith offences must be, but at the same time denounces a woe on him by whom they shall come. If the offending of one of Christ's little Ones will be followed with so awful a punishment that, as he declares, it were better for the Sinner that a millstone was tied about his neck, and that he was cast into the sea, where must the man appear whose pride and vain glory, and carnal contention, hath broken the peace of the Brethren ? or who, it may be, hath at least been the remote occasion of the ruin of a Gospel-church state ? If at any time we are tempted to a conduct which threatens the public tranquillity, let us tremble at the thoughts of being in any degree accessary to the hurt, or dissolution of a People in Christian communion.

The other thing I remark is this : That, from the connection there is between living in peace and enjoying the God of love and peace, it appears that they are liars, who, notwithstanding

standing they openly disturb the peace of Israel, boast of their communion with God. We are warned in the Scripture not to credit those who *say they have fellowship with him and yet walk in darkness*, 1 John i. 6. It is not uncommon for the most disorderly persons to make the highest pretences to religion, and captivate many; and sometimes notorious Transgressors this way talk much of their spiritual enjoyments; but they are certainly under a delusion; there is a manifest analogy in the Divine dispensations; on the same principle the Lord communes with a Society he communes with an individual Person: If the God of love and peace will withdraw from a Church where disorder and contentions prevail, which the promise in our text implies, can it be thought that he will delight in those who are at the bottom of this sinful behaviour?

Thanks be to God, at present, these roots of bitterness have not sprung up in either of our Communities; yet, Brethren, let us not be secure, but rather look out diligently that we may be as the garden of the Lord, free from noxious weeds, clean, and in good order! so shall our beloved Redeemer delight
to

to come in among us, and eat his pleasant fruits.

I hope I may soberly say, that our meeting together so long, in the manner we have done, without the least uneasiness, but with a perfect mutual satisfaction, is, in my opinion, a genuine proof of a prevailing good spirit among us: Had there not been a general habit of peace, and a readiness to submit to one another in love, it is easy to see that dissensions might have arose. I am sorry to tell it, but sometimes the Enemy hath availed himself, and a Church has been divided and injured by the shameful contention of persons under a profession of religion about so trifling a matter as a seat in the place of their meeting: This is far from the humility which becomes a Disciple of Jesus: But the love of God will teach a man to be a door-keeper in his house, or to sit on the threshold, rather than for a moment to disturb *Zion's* peace.

We have the pleasure to find our Friends universally satisfied during this association, and, what is still more delightful, we hear many of them declare, with gratitude to the Lord, that he hath owned it to their personal edification: How far it hath been blest to the

E

spiritual

spiritual advantage of the Auditory in general will one day be known: I am not without hope that the God of all grace hath made this occasional union, transitory as it is, subservient to the purposes of his love; may it hereafter appear to each Congregation, that his power hath been exerted to the effectual calling of some, who shall bear an honorable testimony for Christ in their day! In the mean time we have reason to be thankful that, after more than seven months assembling together, we separate in the same spirit in which we first united; with this difference only, that our respect for each other is, I trust, more abundantly confirmed by reciprocal tokens of love.

This union will call for future reflection; and you will not forget, my Beloved, when fixed in your own habitation, the things you have heard and seen whilst sojourning with us. If time would permit, I could rehearse the subjects of our ministry during this period: You are this day witness of their importance and glory, and likewise of our harmony in the doctrines of the gospel. Has the trumpet, in any instance, given an uncertain sound? Hath it not been the mutual concern of your

Ministers

Ministers to improve this opportunity in attempting to establish your hearts in the true grace of God? And may we not hope that our labour hath not been altogether in vain?

I flatter myself that no one will be offended at the freedom I take to caution you, lest the pleasure or profit, which any of either Church may have found in the ministry of the other should unsettle their minds, and entice them from the place they usually attended. The old Serpent will be too cunning for us, if we are not on our guard; "Satan may get an advantage even from this instance of Brotherly-kindness, if our love is not tempered with knowledge and judgment; therefore be not ignorant of his devices. Will it not contradict the design of this friendly conjunction, which was as much as might be to keep a Congregation together, while their house was preparing, if either Community, when parted, should suffer the loss of any who were accustomed to fill up their assemblies? And indeed, what advantage can arise from a change? Have you not full proof that in both Churches the same doctrine is preached, and the like means of Salvation are enjoyed? But I hope that we shall crown this affair,

like Men; with a good understanding; not unstable, as some, but, on this critical separation, shew a firmness of mind, in every Man's repairing to his former situation.

And now, my dear Brethren, who are from this day to attend in your own proper place, what better token of respect can *we* give you, for I speak not in my own name only, I say, what more convincing token of cordial respect can we give you, on parting, than this; with an assurance of your hearty welcome to all the accommodation we have been able to afford you, to dismiss you with this christian farewell?

When *Moses* was to remove with the Congregation of *Israel* from *Horeb*, the Lord graciously told him, saying, *My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.* This reasonable kindness and condescension of the most High is truly wonderful; it enlarged the heart of his Servant, with an holy fervor and confidence to reply: *If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.* You are not like that Flock, about to depart into a wilderness, to be exposed in your outward circumstances, you are going to a commodious dwelling; but in the most convenient situation your happiness depends

depends on the protection and blessing of the Almighty ; we, therefore, earnestly pray that this Presence of the Lord may go with you, as we trust it will continue to abide with us : We send you hence with this desire of our Souls : *The God of love and Peace be with you.* May he compass you with his favor, as with a shield, and may you increase in numbers, gifts, and graces, that your joy in communion may be full !

Finally, Beloved, I am persuaded that while we thus unanimously and earnestly say, " The Lord be with you ;" you are ready to return with the like ardent affection, " We bless you in the name of the Lord." May nothing interrupt our harmony and friendship on earth, till we unite in the Church triumphant ; and, when " new *Jerusalem* shall come down from God out of heaven, as a Bride adorned for her Husband," may each of our number be found in that glorious Body, that we may be everlasting Companions in the fruition of " that kingdom, which the Father hath prepared for his Chosen, from the foundation of the World." *Amen.*

F I N I S ;

In the Press, and in a few Days will be published, by the AUTHOR,

THE Constitution of a GOSPEL-CHURCH adapted to Union and Peace. A Sermon delivered to the Church-Meeting near *Cripplegate*, on the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. JOHN REYNOLDS, their Pastor.



